

HOW U.S. ANTI-SEMITISM REALLY BEGAN

Its Grass-Roots Source in the 90's

OSCAR HANDLIN

BETWEEN 1913 and 1920, in that portentous period that brought so many other changes to the United States and to the world, anti-Semitism became, for the first time, a significant force in this country. As the years went by leading up to the publication of Henry Ford's version of the forged Protocols of the Elders of Zion, great numbers of Americans felt obsessed with fear of the Jew. Ominous hatreds began to take form in economic and social discrimination, and even in political action. Shortly, the Klan would draw for part of its armory upon those hatreds.

The factors that produced anti-Semitism in the 20th century are well known and have been abundantly discussed. Competition for place generated economic discrimination. The movement to restrict immigration gave rise to a chain of arguments in which Jews, like other newcomers, were blamed for pauperism, vice, crime, and every other social evil. The growth of racist thinking allowed men like Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard to foster the Aryan myth. Most important, perhaps, the xenophobia of the war years and after led many Americans to reject everything "foreign."

There was, in addition, another factor

which has not been so well evaluated: the disappointment of many radicals and reformers who somehow came to put the blame for their own failure after 1900 on the Jews. The great populist Tom Watson was only the most striking of a number of figures who felt the world was plunging hellward and held the Jews responsible for the descent. And, significantly, the mass of decent folk who joined the Klan and read the *Dearborn Independent* came from areas that had in the 1890's been strongly moved by radicalism.

The doctrinaire insistence that anti-Semitism was a strong constant in the life of America's Jews from the beginnings of their history in this country has obscured the real significance of the developments after 1913. Those who have pounced with pleasure upon every slight slur, upon every instance of exclusion or discrimination, upon every fugitive hostile pamphlet, have usually neglected to qualify their discoveries by recognition of the fact that the prevailing temper of the 19th century was overwhelmingly tolerant. In each case, the slurs were repudiated, the discriminations denounced, and the prejudiced arguments rebutted by a society willing to accept the Jews as desirable and equal participants in an evolving culture. The steady disappearance of political disabilities early in the century and the opening of all sorts of political and social places as the immigrant Jews adjusted to the New World were the signs of that acceptance.

Indeed, philo-Semitism was far more characteristic of the national attitude before 1900 than anti-Semitism. Americans then were horrified by the Dreyfus case; they condemned the pogroms in Russia, the ritual murder charges in Hungary, and the distorted propaganda of the Stöckers and the

THE common belief is that anti-Semitism is, invariably, an expression of conservatism or "reaction." But evidence to the contrary is impressive; and in the United States particularly, as OSCAR HANDLIN points out, the emergence of ideological anti-Semitism, contrary to general opinion, seems to be connected with the growth of certain forms of "grass-roots" radicalism. Mr. Handlin, associate professor of history at Harvard and a frequent contributor to *COMMENTARY*, is the author of *Boston's Immigrants* (1941), *The Immigrant in American Politics* (1944), and *Commonwealth* (1946). Mr. Handlin was born in 1915 and studied at Brooklyn College and Harvard University.

Drumonts in Germany and France. After all, in 1899 Tom Watson, later to win unenviable notoriety as a Klansman, writing a history of France, went out of his way vigorously to denounce medieval prejudices against the Jews.

To be sure, the hostile attitudes that developed after 1913 were not inscribed upon a *tabula rasa*. They were overlaid on conceptions of the Jew that had already taken form before the 19th century drew to a close. *The hatred the Klansman bore in his heart was new; but his image of the Jew was not.* An examination of that image in the decade before 1900, before it had become charged with anti-Semitism, will illuminate the whole nature of the problem.

TO A certain extent, the American picture of the Jew was based upon real contacts. As the number of Jews in the United States grew steadily through the 19th century, they became familiar figures in every part of the country. From dealings with them emerged a distinct stereotype, the features of which were dictated by the condition of the Jews as immigrants.

Like other immigrants the Jew was a strange and easily recognized character in American society. He could be distinguished from the mass of his fellow citizens physically, in visual or auditory terms. In mid-19th century, there was still a good deal of vagueness about his particular features, however. What seemed then to mark off the Jew most prominently was language and accent. Yet to untutored American ears his sounds were quite like those of the generality of Germans; often he was counted simply a kind of German.

The popular poems of the New England humorist Charles Follen Adams contain the most characteristic expressions of this early image. The central personage of the poems bore the unmistakable name Yawcob Strauss, and he spoke an outlandish dialect which apparently held all the humor. But Yawcob was not recognizably different from any other German. A shopkeeper, he was pictured in a wholly kindly light, sentimental

and good-hearted, preoccupied with his beer and his pipe. The same lack of differentiation was evident in such minor characters as Shonny Schwartz, "mit his hair so soft und yellow und his face so blump und mellow."

By the 1890's however, the stereotype was much more clearly delineated. In the comic magazines of the decade it appeared fully drawn in all its lights and shadows. Occupationally, the Jew was more distinctive than ever. He had by then been identified as a peddler, as an old-clothes dealer, and as a pawnbroker; indeed the three-ball sign and the title "uncle" were synonymous with him. Distinctive names also set him off; Isaacs or Cohen, Ikey, Jake, or Abie. His appearance was familiar too, pack on back, or holding a basket, or pushing a cart. His garments were either old and shiny with an inevitable black derby hat, or else they were ludicrously new and flashy. His hooked nose stood prominently forth from his bearded face and his accent was thick. Finally, he was invariably concerned with money; the words put into his mouth dealt always with finance and reflected a stingy, grasping temperament. Some Jews were just on the edge of dishonesty, like the Bowery shysters Katch and Pinch. But even the likable Old Isaacs of the Bowery, in the popular play, tells his daughter, "Vhy, I vould trust you mit my life, Rachel. But vid mein money, ach, dot vas different."

By the end of the century the stereotype was clear. Repeated in popular novels, in the press, on the dramatic and vaudeville stage, it made Americans acquainted with a distinctive pattern of physical features, clothing, forms of expression, and language associated with the Jews. Most important, it ascribed to that figure a pervasive concern with money.

These caricatures in the perspective of their later uses have the appearance of anti-Semitic insults. But there is evidence that they were not meant and not taken as such. In the first place, no such intent was involved. A public school teacher in New York could affectionately give *Oliver Twist* to a little Jewish boy as a reward. And as late as 1913, Booth Tarkington would un-

reflectively but without derogatory intent describe in like terms his character Maurice Levy in the popular Penrod stories.

HERE was the critical departure from the Shylock image; the American stereotype involved no hostility, no negative judgment. In a popular story, repeatedly reprinted throughout the century, Moloch, a money-lender thirsty for revenge, plots to compel a duke's son to marry his niece. The duke's response is not anger, but compassion. In the denouement, he declaims:

"Take her, my son, and wear her close to thy heart, for she is a jewel worthy of thy high position. . . . Moloch, where is now thy revenge!"

"Thou hast conquered it, my noble Duke," answered Moloch overcome with surprise and admiration.

And everyone lived happily ever after. Indeed, a "Jew detective" with "the stamp of his race indelibly traced on the features of all his blood" could, in another romance, win the beautiful Anglo-Saxon heroine, who in assenting declares, "To you I now turn for happiness in life, for your people shall be my people, your creed my creed, and your God my God."

The stereotype of the Jew is more comprehensible when we recall that it was, in the 1890's, only one among many. The notion that physical appearance was a sign of national identity was so widely held that a dime novel could speak as a matter of course of the New York detective who disguised himself as an Englishman. In the comic magazines the Jew was joined by the drunken, shiftless Irishman, by the sinister Catholic priest, the gaudy or ragged Negro, the stupid, soggy German, and by the avaricious Yankees Mandy and Aminadab. Identified in outward aspects and in dialect as decisively as the Jew, these were intended to be as funny as, and no more hostile than, the Mr. Dooley of the same period. Significantly, the Jews themselves accepted the caricature; *Der Yiddischer Puck*, a comic magazine edited and published by the well-known journalist N. M. Schaikewitz, often sketched

the very same picture of the Jew as its English counterparts. In neither case did the picture reflect a deprecatory attitude.

HOWEVER, in the 1890's an additional element had begun to take a place in the American picture of the Jew. The conception of Jewish interest in money deepened into the conviction that Jews controlled the great fortunes of the world. Although the Jews are still sometimes miserly Shylocks, more often they are princes wielding power through their gold.

In part the newer image was a shadow cast by the prominence of certain Jewish banking houses in Europe. If there were any who had not already heard of the Rothschilds and of Lazard Frères, they had now only to pick up an English edition of Drumont's *La France juive*, published in the United States, to become familiar with long lists of such names — even if they chose not to accept the book's general anti-Semitic propositions. Articles in popular magazines devoted considerable space to Jewish millionaires. The exotic figure of Disraeli, "the Empire-making Jew," seemed large in significance; and travelers in England, like James Russell Lowell, were quite ready from what they saw to believe Jews were coming to control the whole world.

By a variety of means the notion of limitless Jewish wealth acquired wide currency. Already in Henry Adams's anonymous novel of 1880 there appeared the opulent Hartbeest Schneidekoupon, "descended from all the kings of Israel and . . . prouder than Solomon in his glory." In dime novels the fabulously wealthy Jew was a stock character, and so commonplace was this notion of Jewish riches that in the midst of depression in 1894, a magazine seriously suggested that the unemployed of the whole country could be relieved if only "the trustees of the magnificent fund that Baron Hirsch entrusted to a band of Wall Street bankers" would "loosen the cords about . . . [their] money bags."

The wealth of the Jews was ascribed to the fact that they were "a parasitical race

who, producing nothing, fasten on the produce of land and labor and live on it, shoving the breath of life out of commerce and industry as sure as the creeper throttles the tree that upholds it." Like the American Jew in a serialized novel who stayed at his telephone speculating while the world was threatened with destruction, these people were credited with the capacity for profiting from every contingency.

But again, such judgments were not intrinsically hostile. So a tract that warned "you should not be prejudiced against any race" went on to point out the Jews were naturally money changers through no fault of their own, but simply "on account of their excessive shrewdness." There were even laudatory accounts, praising the Jews' ability to make money. One book in defense of the Jews boasted, "In finance the Jew has for four hundred years been the factor that supplied the nations of the earth with money. The financial system of the world, its inventions and perfection, we owe to the Rothschilds." A little later, a compilation published by the American Hebrew Publishing Company casually remarked, "Of all the nations which the world has known, the commercial instinct is strongest and most fully developed in the Jew. He never sacrifices future opportunity for present gain." If an occasional commentator did point out that the great American bankers were Christians, that only seemed to stress the indirect international connections of the Jews.

TO SOME extent, the lines of socialist thinking, increasingly prevalent in the United States, that connected capitalism with the Jews, strengthened these conceptions. So, the foremost exponent in this country of revisionist socialism in a widely read volume pointed out: "Our era may be called the *Jewish Age*. The Jews have indeed had a remarkable influence on our civilization. Long ago they infused in our race the idea of one God, and now they have made our whole race worship a new true God: the Golden Calf . . . 'Jewism,' to our

mind, best expresses that special curse of our age, *Speculation*."

Even more important, the growing preoccupation of many Americans with the money question fixed the tie between Jews and finance. In a period of falling prices, disaster was close at hand for great numbers of farmers who, despite mounting production, saw their situation deteriorate steadily, particularly after the depression of 1893. The temptation was well-nigh irresistible to seek a solution in terms of monetary reform. There were still some calls for greenbacks, but increasingly those who agitated for a change in the currency demanded bi-metallism—the free coinage of silver in some established relationship with gold.

In the 1890's these wishes met with an uninterrupted succession of defeats. The rate of silver coinage was not expanded but contracted. President Cleveland's arrangement with J. P. Morgan strengthened the hold of gold and the election of 1896 confirmed the trend. What was more, silver in that decade was abandoned by almost every other country that still used it: Tunis in 1891, Austria-Hungary in 1892, China in 1896, Japan and Russia in 1897.

Frustrated, the reformers acquired a sense of religious intensity about their cause; their speeches became profuse with Christian images. Unable to see any flaw in the rationality of their arguments, they could explain their defeats only by the intervention of some external power. The blame was not in themselves, nor in the people in whom they had faith; it must be outside, in England, among the international bankers, or—with growing frequency—among the Jews.

The prominence of G. Montefiore-Levi and Alfred de Rothschild in the Brussels International Monetary Conference gave the silver men one ground for their suspicion; the activity of Perry Belmont among the gold Democrats gave them another. But they hardly needed evidence. By 1894 the famous *Coin's Financial School* included a map entitled, "The English Octopus. It Feeds on Nothing but Gold." Where England belonged was the simple inscription,

"Rothschild." In a novel, William Harvey traced the monetary difficulties of the whole world to a plot by "Baron Rothe" to demonetize silver for the sake of English world mastery. In 1895 a silver tract noted as a fact that the Rothschilds owned "one-half the gold in the world, available for use as money, and their aids and satellites own nearly all the remainder."

At the Democratic national convention the very next year Bryan ascended to his blood-stirring peroration, "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." As to what must have then been in the thoughts of his delirious audience, we may guess from the reasons advanced by the silver men in the next few years to explain their defeat. They had been beaten, they explained, by the power of an "invisible empire," an "oligarchy" centered in the "mysterious money power" which had bound "the hands of the United States" and had then "proceeded . . . with marvelous rapidity to enslave the human race." Although there was a vagueness in identifying the members of the oligarchy, the Rothschilds are often mentioned, and occasionally Shylock openly reveals himself. Thus, one of the reformers, J. C. Redpath, has Shylock confess his fear of the radicals, and has him point out that the "insurgents will presently turn upon me and my tribe and destroy our business. I must keep my influence with these contemptible Christian nations, else they will cease to support me and my enterprises. My business is to live by the labor of others." The use of such terms was perhaps figurative to begin with, but they certainly received a more literal reading as time went on.

THE radicals' suspicions of the designs of the financial oligarchy gained strength from the sense of mystery within which Americans had long enveloped the Jew. The elements of the conviction in the United States that there was a strangeness about the Jew were quite different from those making up the demoniac character of the Jew which had persisted into 19th-century Europe from medieval times. The emphasis in this coun-

try was upon interpretations of the mission of Israel, which went back at least two hundred years to the reflections of Cotton Mather on the subject.

The visible evidence of mystery was the persistence of Jewry itself. Wonderful in their past achievements, the Jews were "still more wonderful in their preservation." Scattered among the nations, they held to their identity. As with the gulf stream, endless movement did not alter their essential quality; found throughout the world, they were everywhere alien.

The strangeness discernible in Jewish ritual and belief might extend to many unknown realms. The rabbi initiate in the lore of Cabala might possess the power of divination. By the same token the detective with a Jewish name might uncover a murderer with the aid of "second sight." All sort of practices, suggested or actual, might have hidden significance. "The Jewish people don't believe in taking life," testified a social worker, "so to all sorts of vermin they use a whisk brush and out it goes out of the window." The functionings of their institutions were likewise obscure. The *Century Magazine* exposed the practices of the "Kahal" through which Jews "have always succeeded in driving alien elements from the towns . . . where they have settled to get into their hands the capital and immovable property of those places."

There was a purpose to the survival of the group and to the persistence of these differences—so went speculation and assertion. In one sense, the Jew retained his identity to serve as the eternal witness of the truth of Christianity. To one Christian advocate of the Jewish return to Palestine, these people were "Jehovah's ever present answer to the innuendoes against the absolute credibility of the Inspiration of the Old Testament."

But there was a larger purpose still, one involved in the whole Christian conception of salvation. For it was in the whole scheme of things that the mass conversion of the Jews would herald the second coming. While practical efforts to induce Jews in the United States to change their religion seem

to have fallen off in this period, their Christian fellow citizens were still eager to read about such conversions and looked forward with anticipation to ultimate total success. The Reverend Joseph Ingraham dedicated three of his immensely popular novels to "the daughters of Israel," to the "men of Israel," and to all "American Hebrews" in the hope they would see the light.

In a more rationalistic form, the mission of the Jews was sometimes described as the task of disseminating among all mankind their own peculiar cosmopolitan spirituality and sense of ethics. But that still left a distinctive purpose to their strangeness. If Americans then continued avidly to read Sue's *Wandering Jew*, it was in part at least owing to the fascination of its very title.

The vogue of popular novels with a Biblical setting added to the atmosphere of mystery that surrounded Jews. Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* was only the best known of an enormous number of books the scenes of which were set in ancient Palestine or Babylonia, books which took their readers back in everyday language to the incidents of the Bible. In these stories, Jewish characters appeared in a variety of forms, generally sympathetically portrayed, but connected with the most sacred and mysterious events.

The attributes of mystery were naturally transferred to the present, since Jews had retained their identity from the most ancient times and since their strangeness gave continuing evidence of inexplicable characteristics. This mysterious strain explains the beautiful Jewess who appears so often in the novels of these years. She has antecedents of course in Scott's Rebecca and in Shakespeare's Jessica; but she is no mere copy. The American heroine is exquisitely beautiful and distinguished by great nobility of character. Some taint, curse, or fateful misfortune involves her in intricate difficulties which, however, lead to a happy ending. Often she is juxtaposed with a mean and miserly father, who is, in a sense, her taint, the source through his paternity of her troubles. The mysterious element here is hereditary, in a way, racial.

These mysterious racial ties can also take other forms. In 1872, Lynn Linton, a popular English writer of romantic stories, described in a novel the life of a revolutionary who attempted in modern times to pattern his acts exactly upon those of Christ. To heighten the analogy, the author gave her hero the English version of Christ's name, Joshua Davidson. The novel was well known in the United States. Twenty years later, Jesse Jones, a radical New England minister who had his own doctrines of social reform to expound, labored on a novel that used the same device. However, Jones felt the compulsion to secure for his protagonist a Jewish ancestor, one of "Israel's sacred race," a grandfather, from whom Joshua could learn "as a 'son of the Law,' the sacred Lore of Israel." The injection of this element was significant, for it suggested that there was a mysterious body of knowledge available only to "one of the blood."

IN THIS review of the American image of the Jew, we have succeeded in crystallizing three elements: the stereotype of the immigrant Jew, the relationship to finance, and the sense of mystery. In the writings of the populist leader Ignatius Donnelly one may trace the combination of those elements into a pattern that markedly influenced many of the earnest radicals of the period. In *Caesar's Column*, a utopian novel, Donnelly looked ahead to a period when "the task which Hannibal attempted . . . to subject the Latin and mixed-Gothic races of Europe to the domination of the Semitic blood," had been accomplished "by the cousins of the Phoenicians, the Israelites. The nomadic children of Abraham . . . [had] fought and schemed their way, through infinite pains of persecution . . . to a power higher than the thrones of Europe."

At that future date, "survival of the fittest" had made the aristocracy of the world "almost altogether of Hebrew origin." Christians had earlier subjected the Jews "to the most terrible ordeal of persecution. . . . Only the strong of body, the cunning of brain, . . . the men with capacity to live

where a dog would starve, survived the awful trial. . . . Now the Christian world is paying in tears and blood for the sufferings inflicted by their bigoted and ignorant ancestors upon a noble race. . . . The great money-getters of the world . . . rose from dealers in old clothes and peddlers of hats to merchants, to bankers, to princes. They were as merciless to the Christian as the Christian had been to them." Under the leadership of Prince Cabono, born Jacob Isaacs, the Jewish oligarchy was pushing the world toward destruction.

In this anticipation of things to come is a tone of fear. The radical urging changes yet dreads the effects of change. For Donnelly was no facile optimist as to the possibility of reform. His revolution degenerates into an orgy of destruction in which the whole of civilization is consumed.

Significantly, the brains of the revolutionary organization was "a Russian Jew . . . a cripple, driven out of his synagogue in Russia, years ago, for some crimes he had committed." With the success of the uprising, he fled to Judea, taking with him one hundred million dollars of public funds, with this vast wealth intending to "re-establish the glories of Solomon, and revive the ancient splendors of the Jewish race, in the midst of the ruins of the world."

There were specific reasons for the distrust of revolutionary violence. The labor rioting at Homestead, at Coeur d'Alene, and at Pullman in these years, the activities of the anarchists at home and in Europe, had the substantial citizens eager to build armories in the middle of the cities and had even the radicals worried about the dangers of unrestrained socialism.

But more interesting for our purposes is the implication in *Caesar's Column* that there were hidden organizations, conservative and radical, working toward hidden Jewish ends. To that suspicion would later be added confused impressions of what the Zionist Basel Congress of 1897 was up to, hazy recollections of European charges, and the explicit accusation of the Protocols of Zion that the gold standard was the Jewish

tool of world domination. The sum total would be the conspiracy of the international Jew. Millions of well-intentioned Americans would find the later anti-Semitic libel credible because they had already accepted it in a form that was not anti-Semitic.

THERE still remains the task of accounting for the sense of fear from which the idea of conspiracy grew, a sense that was repeatedly expressed in other connections as well. The apocalyptic visions of the radicals in these years were often stated in terms of imminence of doom. They envisaged a great era of ruin and destruction that would precede the final redemption and reconstruction of society. The conviction that suffering was inevitable was fed by memories of the Commune of 1870, by scientific descriptions of lost worlds or of the end of this one, by the analogy with the reign of anti-Christ that was to precede the second coming, and by the figure of Christ himself.

Thus in both the English and the American *Joshua Davidson*, the martyr hero is killed by the very people to whom he preached and for whom he suffered. Donnelly's novel of revolt ended in disaster as did Jack London's a few years later.

These uneasy conceptions of the future were judgments of the unhappy nature of the present in which they were written. Certainly in the turbulent decade of the 1890's there was much that seemed to be changing—and for the worse. For the class in which Edith Wharton and Henry Adams grew up, the changes appeared to be a deterioration of culture; and the reaction of that class was fastidiousness in speech and manners. But for the mass of Americans, change took another form.

Through the period change centered in the city, an object of dread and fascination. To the city, and particularly to New York, whole regions of the South and West felt themselves in bondage. Yet to the people of those regions, the metropolis was altogether strange; often their only source of information was the lurid detective story. The farmers' view of the city was therefore based less

on knowledge of it than on its impact upon them.

The cities were unnatural. They worshiped Mammon not God. They could all burn down, Bryan declaimed, and the great heart of America would still beat. "Embodied paganism," the city was "composed of the people of this world . . . seeking the ends of this world . . . satiating the animal man with the riches, with the lavish luxury of things." The city, "Babylon the great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth . . . drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus . . . reigneth over the kings of the earth"—and feeds off the nations.

This literal fear of the city was not altogether surprising in a period which, despite its rationalism, still found popular the occult, spiritualism, mesmerism, theosophy, astrology, mental healing, even among the intellectual reformers. Nor is it unexpected that some men should transfer the blame for their tribulations to those alien places. In the same years, others were blaming the Pope or secret societies, and one ingenious author even demonstrated that the Jesuits had infiltrated the Masonic societies in order to spread atheism in the United States. The city was indeed a likely butt for the hatred and resentments of disappointed people.

In the United States, the Jews were particularly connected with the city through the commerce that was its lifeblood. Coming back in 1907, Henry James was impressed by the alien quality of American cities. He noted "the extent of the Hebrew conquest of New York," a new Jerusalem, and felt a certitude that the culture of the future in this country might be beautiful in its own right, but would inevitably be totally strange.

This was the opinion of a widely traveled man of the world. But what did the farmers think in the populist areas while the mounting burden of debt loosened their hold on the land? In the years of populism's mounting strength, William Allen White was reaching maturity in Eldorado, Kansas. The children of the few Jews in town mixed freely with the adolescent elite of which

White was himself a member, just as Maurice Levy was one of the Booth Tarkington boys. When White thought of the Jew he thought of the wealth of the tradespeople, of the luxury of their weddings. Himself well off, his impressions were favorable.

BUT there were others, many others, who believed "all trade is treachery," who believed that commerce "by the manipulation of Satan" has become "a curse to humanity" dominating all the people of the earth. To those people every Jewish storekeeper was in the advance guard of the new civilization, bore the standard of all the dread forces that threatened their security.

Two decades later, F. Scott Fitzgerald, a boy who had grown up in Donnelly's Minnesota, who had come to New York and never adjusted to the change, gave explicit statement to that sentiment. Down the street, the hero of one of his novels "read a dozen Jewish names on a line of stores; in the door of each stood a dark little man watching the passers from intent eyes—eyes gleaming with suspicion, with pride, with clarity, with cupidity, with comprehension. New York—he could not dissociate it now from the slow upward creep of this people—the little stores, growing, expanding. . . . It was impressive—in perspective it was tremendous."

In those formative years of the 1890's, the injured groups of American society, in agony, had emitted the cries of an infant without words to express its pain. Searching vainly for the means of relief, they could somehow guess that the source of their trials was a change going on in the world in which they lived. And groping toward an understanding of that change, some perceived as its instrument the Jew. If all trade was treachery and the city was Babylon, then the Jew stood ready to be assigned the role of arch-conspirator.

It was this suspicion that would transform the conception of the Jew in the 20th century. Growing in intensity under the heat of racism and xenophobia and frustration after 1913, it would put in the place of the older images that of the Elders of Zion.